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IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 19 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the attached declaration by the Presidency of the European Union regarding the financial situation of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 117.

(Signed) Jean-Louis WOLZFELD
Permanent Representative of Luxembourg
to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Declaration by the Presidency of the European Union regarding the financial situation of the United Nations issued on 19 November 1997

The European Union strongly deplores the fact that the United States Congress has suspended its autumn session proceedings without adopting any legislation concerning the payment of the arrears due to the United Nations and that the United States of America - which is the largest contributor to the Organization but primarily its largest debtor - is not signifying any intention to start settling its debts.

It is very worrying that one of the major Member States continues not to fulfil its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter, which fall within its commitments under international law. The absence of any decision by the United States Congress on the payment of arrears comes at a time when the United Nations is making an unprecedented effort to reform its structures and methods of operation.

The fact that the United States of America is continuing not to pay the arrears in contributions it owes the Organization perpetuates the serious financial crisis with which the United Nations is struggling, and seriously affects the climate of trust within the Organization.

The European Union is counting on all States Members of the United Nations to honour their obligations vis-à-vis the United Nations promptly, in full and unconditionally, in accordance with the scale of assessments adopted by the General Assembly.

That is the approach taken by the Member States of the European Union, whose combined contributions account for 35.4 per cent of the Organization's regular budget and 37.9 per cent of its budget for peacekeeping operations. They act in this way because they are convinced of the need to preserve the irreplaceable role of the United Nations as the only international organization of a universal character which takes global action in the cause of peace, social equality and justice.